

Letters to the Editor

Thomas Edison and *Science*

Sir:

It was most appropriate to picture the cover of Volume 1, Number 1 issue of *Science* on the cover of the July 1980 issues of *JASIS*. Unfortunately, the assertion that "The first editor was Thomas Edison" [1] is incorrect. As was explained in *Science*'s own centennial issue [2], John Michels was the first editor.

Edison in 1880 was at a high point in his career, working on the electric lamp and developing means to commercialize its use. He was anxious to publicize his ideas on electricity. . . a journal under his influence would have certain advantages. . . while his name was nowhere in evidence in the front matter, the first issue of *Science* devoted two and a half pages to electrical research and contained specific references to work being done at Edison laboratories; later issues continued this pattern. . . Edison agreed to back the journal financially while Michels served as editor, writer, and subscription agency at a fixed salary of \$30 per week."

Apparently, even 100 years ago, there was conflict and confusion in the relationships of editors and publishers, science and technology, academic and commercial interests.

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1. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 31(4):225; 1980.
2. Kohlstedt, S. G. "Science: The Struggle for Survival, 1880 to 1894." *Science*, 209(4452):33-42; 1980.

Editor's Reply

Mr. Bezilla is correct. Edison was a founder, not the editor. We thank other readers who also noted the error.

Charles T. Meadow
Editor